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1: J Clin Pathol. 1995 May;48(5):466-9.

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Volatile organic compounds in the breath of patients with schizophrenia.

Phillips M, Erickson GA, Sabas M, Smith JP, Greenberg J.

Department of Medicine, St Vincent's Medical Center of Richmond, Staten Island, NY 10310-1699, USA.

AIMS--To analyse the breath of patients with schizophrenia for the presence of abnormal volatile organic compounds. METHODS--A case comparison study was performed in two community hospitals in Staten Island, New York. Twenty five patients with schizophrenia, 26 patients with other psychiatric disorders, and 38 normal controls were studied. Alveolar breath samples were collected from all participants, and volatile organic compounds in the breath were assayed by gas chromatography with mass spectroscopy. Differences in the distribution of volatile organic compounds between the three groups were compared by computerised pattern recognition analysis. RESULTS--Forty eight different volatile organic compounds were observed in the breath samples. Three separate pattern recognition methods indicated an increased differentiation capability between the patients with schizophrenia and the other subjects. Pattern recognition category classification models using 11 of these volatile organic compounds identified the patients with schizophrenia with a sensitivity of 80.0% and a specificity of 61.9%. Volatile organic compounds in breath were not significantly affected by drug therapy, age, sex, smoking, diet, or race. CONCLUSIONS--Microanalysis of volatile organic compounds in breath combined with pattern recognition analysis of data may provide a new approach to the diagnosis and understanding of schizophrenia. The physiological basis of these findings is still speculative.

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